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SUBJECT: LATVIAN IMPLEMENTATION OF BERLIN DECLARATION ON TB

REF: STATE 6989

¶1. Per reftel request, the following is the status of Latvia's implementation of the Berlin Declaration on Tuberculosis (TB).

¶2. According to Rinalds Mucins, Ministry of Health Under Secretary of State, Latvia has had an active anti-tuberculosis program in place since the mid-1990's, so no fundamental revisions or new programs have been necessary to meet the GOL's Berlin Declaration commitments. Political will has been strong to combat the disease, he said, and collaboration between the government, health care providers, and the private sector has been good. Mucins noted statistics that Latvia's incidence of TB per 100,000 residents, which peaked in 1998 at 14.7, dropped to 5.4 in 2007.

Adoption of Stop TB Strategy

¶3. Mucins said that the Health Ministry has prepared its 2008-2012 Program for Tuberculosis Containment, which will be presented to the government in June, with PM approval expected by the end of summer. The 2008-2012 program includes, point-by-point, all six components listed in the Berlin Declaration, and adds a seventh component on international collaboration in fighting TB. He noted that Latvia already implements the DOTS and DOTS-plus strategies. Anti-TB medicines are free to patients and doses are administered either in the doctor's office or by medical workers at the patient's home.

Sustainable Financing and Regional Efforts

¶4. Latvia's own resources are sufficient to fund their anti-TB efforts, according to Mucins, so no outside funding is needed. He said that Latvia does receive EU funding to combat TB, and uses that money to send experts to other countries, particularly noting that Latvia provides advice and project assistance to Moldova. Mucins also stated that Latvia's premier anti-TB institute, the Latvian Center of Tuberculosis and Lung Disease, provides training to physicians and medical students in the region, and has specialized expertise in Multiple-Drug Resistant TB treatment.